Newspaper report on mining sector

1819. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in the 'Times of India' dated 16th February, 1995 under the caption "Policy snags holding up FDI in mining sector";

(b) if so, what are the details thereof:

(c) whether Government propose to review its new policy in August, 1993;

(d) the manner in which propose to remove such "snags" or 'communication gap" between Central and State Governments and reluctance by Geological Survey of India in sharing information for foreign investment in the mining sector; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Government does not propose to review the National Mineral Policy, 1993 at present. Grant of prospecting licences/mines leases is being carried out under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder. Any difficulty which may be faced by State Governments or foreign investors in investment in the mining sector would be removed by a process of consultation. The Geological Survey of India has indicated that there is no reluctance in making data available to investors and its publications are freely available on sale.

Exploration of minerals in Gujarat

1820. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up any plant in the state of Gujarat for survey and exploration of minerals:

(b) if so, the number and details with locations where such plants are functioning in the State:

(c) whether Government propose to expand these plants or set up new units; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) No plants have been set up in Gujarat for survey and exploration.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Geological Survey of India (GSI) which has its office in Gandhinagar (Gujarat) conducts survey and exploration for minerals according to approved programmes. So, there is no need to set up any new units.

Gold field identified in Karnataka

1821. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Geological Survey has identified gold fields in the State of Karnataka;

(b) whether Government have assessed the quantum of gold available in the field area;

(c) what will be the per ton excavation cost; and

(d) whether Government propose to allot excavation to a private party?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has estimated a total reserve of 15 408 million tonnes of gold ore with average grade varying from 1.22 gms./tonne to 3.83 g/t of gold in different gold fields of Karnataka.

(c) The excavation cost of gold depends upon the metallurgy of the deposit and the depth of the ore body.

(d) As per new Mineral Policy and amended Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 permits the exploitation of gold by the private sector.

Exploration of gold in Hutti Mines in Karnataka

1822. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Geological Programming Board has abandoned exploration of large-scale reserves of Gold in Hutti Mines area of Raichur District of Karnataka and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether experts and professionals have opined that about 650 tonnes of Gold could be recovered from five square kilometers block where mining is currently underway; and

(c) whether the Central Government propose to make a scientific attempt to determine the extent of resources while dismissing claims about such deposits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV). (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The President, Geological Society of India and retired Managing Director, Hutti Gold Mines Ltd. have opined that Hutti Gold Mines area has reserves of 658 tonnes of gold out of which 44 tonnes has been extracted.

(c) The Hutti Gold Mines area is already leased to the Hutti Gold Mines Limited. There is no proposal of exploration of gold in the leased area unless requested by the lessee.

News report on inisible gold in Kolar

1823. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Invisible gold to put new shine on Kolar's fortunes" appearing in the 'Business Standard' New Delhi dated the 28th December, 1994;

(b) if so, the details of the matter reported therein; and

(c) what action has been or is being taken by Government to locate 'invisible gold'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The association of gold with arsenopyrite is well-known and this association was used as pathfinder for location of 'free' gold. The mining activity in Kolar Gold Fields (K.G.F.) is restricted at present to 'free' gold. Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. (BGML) is in touch with the Scientists of the department of Geology, Karnataka University, Dharwar to know the details of their work on 'invisible gold' in Gadag gold field. However, BGML has neither received nor discussed any proposal of 'Wiluna Mining Operations (WMO) to mine 'invisible gold' in K.G.F.

Foreign Assistance for Mineral Exploration

1824. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign assistance is being sought for mineral exploration in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps proposed to attract foreign investments in the mineral sector;